

# TASC

***Technical Assistance and Services Center***

---

## **Flex Program Hour Highlights**

*Date: January 26, 2000*

*Topic: Quality*

*Technical Advisors: Dr. Steve Blattner, Northland Health Group  
Chad Austin, Kansas Hospital Association  
Mike Speight, Kansas Foundation for Medical Care*

Dr. Steve Blattner of the Northland Health Group (207-767-7500 or [SRB@nhgmaine.com](mailto:SRB@nhgmaine.com)) opened the meeting with comments on the quality requirements for the Flex Program. He noted that HCFA appears to have a “wide level of tolerance for hospital quality programs” and that there is no “one right method.” He advocated getting physicians involved in quality activities.

Chad Austin of the Kansas Hospital Association (785-233-7436 or [caustin@kha-net.org](mailto:caustin@kha-net.org)) described a patient satisfaction survey the Association is implementing with the help of the Kansas Office of Rural Health. They are measuring satisfaction in 30 Kansas hospitals – three of them critical access. They are breaking the survey – which is mailed to patients – into three components: (1) inpatient, (2) outpatient, and (3) emergency services. Response rate is approximately 25%. Hospitals can compare their results to a national average for each question. Cost to each hospital is around \$1,000, half of which is subsidized by an outside grant. This survey will allow critical access hospitals to chart their progress in enhancing patient satisfaction and show quality outcomes.

Dr. Blattner noted that patient satisfaction is just one measure of quality which might also include clinical outcomes and efficiency.

Mike Speight of the Kansas Foundation for Medical Care (1-800-432-0407 or [mspeight@ksmc.org](mailto:mspeight@ksmc.org)), the Kansas PRO, followed with a description of quality resources available at the state PRO. He described CAH-related activities that might be done by the PRO including: (1) quality improvement projects, (2) length of stay review, (3) compliance plan audit, and (4) peer review.

The Institute for Healthcare Improvement ([www.ihl.org](http://www.ihl.org)) was suggested as a good resource for quality information.

Terry Hill reported that the National Rural health Resource Center (218-720-0700 or [nrhc@ruralcenter.org](mailto:nrhc@ruralcenter.org)) has numerous community planning and assessment manuals and “how to” tools, as well as a listing of technical consultants that can help with these activities. They also have information on quality assessment and patient satisfaction surveys. He invited states to access the TASC library and consultant database – now numbering over 100 consultants.